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SMOKE



Editor

SUSANNA VALENTINE MITCHELL

Assistant Editors

DAVID CORNEL DEJONG

EDWARD NORTH ROBINSON

New York City

S M O K E

History Lesson

"A man is dead, children,
learn his dates quietly,
do not shriek your laughter,
a great man, it matters not what he did,
But he is a great man and a dead man.
Soften your footsteps on the stairs,
Do not kick the balusters,
nor squeak the chalk—no.
Even a dead man hates that noise,"
said the teachers, and were sure
not to take more than five minutes for
this from their classes, because:
there were numbers to be juggled,
parched poems to be learned, and worms
to be examined on new glass slides.

So the children did numbers, recited poems,
and examined the fat worms again and again.
It was very educational.

The man in the coffin was buried.
That night he silently entered the class-room,
and clattering his laughter took a board-eraser
and erased the chalk from his soul.

LAURETTE VIRGINIA PIZER

S M O K E

Now Lettest Thou Thy Servant Depart

I heard the cry of time.
It cut the night in two,
it set a watch on day,
a watch on me, on you,

on hope as on despair.
And I have spun a rhyme
for earth that vanishes like air
who hear the cry of time.

II

Earth turns again to mist
to vapour and to heat.
The individual form has bent
and kissed the judgment seat

where in it's final state
of calm indifference
the one eternal thing looks out
to see the vapours dance.

III

So, in the half-blown night,
I heard a prophet sound
aimed at the heart that had no choice.
Yet if above the ground

or underneath the earth
or crumbled by the sea
I have known time, that know no time,
and shall not cease to be.

SUSANNA VALENTINE MITCHELL

S M O K E

Diplomat of Light

Wisdom we had though wisdom's knowledge we
Lacked like articulate song its listeners:
Foredoomed with learning, food and constancy
For audiences of dumb worshippers,
We put up against the arrogance of air—
Against the most learned deed of blood and breath—
A living temple with atmosphere too rare
To entertain ambassadors of death.
For wisdom we held arch enemy of doom.
O ruinous libel! There the tower stands
Trembling in state above its audience;
There in the silence of that rarefied room
One diplomat of light at large demands
Death's evident fact and not death's reverence.

Wanderers

Given enough rope many a man will hang
Tonight, and many a throat will, stricken, cry.
And many a window and many a door bang
Shut to better keep out the noise and hue
Of these most reckless wanderers tonight.
(These men that never breed enough of trouble.)
Though happier far they are than those who wait
Upon fear as though fear were clean and noble.
Given enough rope many a man will hang
Tonight. But none that hangs will bitterly beg
One penny's worth of mercy, one draft of strong
Final blood. For what they own is immortally big
With that strange excellence of wanderers—being,
Believing and seeking and, seeking, seeing.

S M O K E

Weapons of Enlistment

What man against his better judgment looked and saw
The horizon not ahead but far behind.
Heard his body at war with himself,
Smelt blood on the wind

And the wind in his face like a hand
Mauling and crushing his breath?
Perhaps no man. But if a brave man did
He'd know these were weapons not to fear,
Not fences and boundaries choking blood and land,
But weapons to enlist with.

Only in Flight

Nothing that flies it seems has a sure home.
Wings that are delicate, and swift and sure,
Only in flight and wandering may endure
In that impossible country wherein bloom
The dear dead dreams of migratory men.
And wings that flutter, lost and wandering,
May like dark clouds come crying and blundering
To earth; and if we gently touch them, then
Are they amazing wings no longer, and their flight
Heavier than stone, and their thought of home
The contrary dream of all things driven and dumb.
Though never think that wings so seeking alight
Precariously one moment upon earth. . . .
Wings know apparently what flight is worth.

ALBERT CLEMENTS

But We Are Resting Now

When we looked up we saw all the women there
treading high to the light, letting their hair fall
wide in the flood of sun; brown does scudded ahead
and behind, where tansy and goldenrod flamed, lay
the young of martins and cats a little absurd and
celestial in a peace we could not compute or know.

Then we hugged our knees to our breasts, smiled down
on our toes, and pieced together from shreds of knowledge
and faith such wide happiness wherein all wars had sunk
beneath the spears of innocence, all battle gone to wayward
dallying of brooks, all swords to daffodil and purple fruit.
But there came grey thunder on an old hill, the animals rose,
the furze tilted and whined; when the rain pelted our heads
it was like speech unremembered and estranged, and we went on
tunneling far into the core of our magnificent pretence.

That was morning. At noon we were grave and wet. And before
the cocks shrilled into a sixth and seventh rain we saw
the old men come and wag their broken fingers and heads,
a circle of them, narrowing, so close at last that
we heard only hard breath and tittering. No thing was said,
none answered, but when they left there was only bare sand
on which we kneeled, brown air, and a cracked voice which said
ceaselessly: Gird yourself for this land's sanctity must
be kept intact, indeed, and savory. We could not see each
other's faces, but we repeated it, in incantation, murmured it,
and rose, and marched all day, all night and every coming day.

Don't tell us where you found us. We know. There was a large
wheel over us, cold flesh near, and when we lifted our hands
to wipe our brows for remembering we found we had
no hands, no brow, only blood and these paltry memories.

DAVID CORNEL DEJONG

S M O K E

Out of the Past

Clopping of the horses' hooves
On the smooth pavement,
And the steady falling of April rains,
Measured time hollowly
With an even beat.

Leaning against the cushions
Of the carriage
Dry-eyed
I toyed with the idea
That the celestial hosts wept
At the funeral of my mother.

Wearing a blue serge suit, yellow shoes,
Without money
Even to buy her a flower—
(The relatives contributed)—

I was
An invited guest.

SPAHR HOURLLAND

S M O K E

Old Talk

His mind dove down from the stars and curled in his head.
It said, We cannot know what we have no sense to know.
And the body said, Be still, take it easy: it is better so.

Mind was dizzy with space where it curved and sped
And it lay still to get warm. The body said, You are cold;
And the mind, Let us stay close together and be comforted.

The body went walking, went walking, went walking
More or less alone the body went walking: took the tube
Rode up and down in steel, shot dry under river, felt old.

Where were you all day? asked the body; and the mind
Woke as the body would have gone to sleep. Left behind:
One of us, it said, always goes too high, or too deep.

Then while the night tossed, the cricket-mind sang and sang:
Remember—it sang—when the world was snug and small
With nothing all the morning for you to do but toss a ball
Against the sunlighted wall.

And there was one street
One house and one yard changing color, spring and fall.
- - - Yes, said the body, that was a sweet time and neat; but.

Then the mind said, Always too high now or too deep.
What can we do about it now we're together? the body said.
Well, if it's peace we want, we can always go to sleep.

So for a time the stars flowed on, easy and unbeheld.
Even the mind drowsed in the slack, forgotten head.
Neither ever knew, in the morning, which of them rebelled.

S M O K E

Menhir

Whether for death or love, it stood
On the sparse ridge above the wood—
The monolith, the menhir stone.
Enormous muscled rock, not grown
In that plain country, twice man-high,
Buried in ground, impaled the sky:
Became the axle on which spun
Earth two ways around the sun.
Singular and left alone,
Whether for love or death, the stone
Marked that waste field dedicate
To something that was man's estate:
A violence upon that ground
While earth whirled dizzily around;
A violence which, though spent at length,
One morning more regathered strength
And thus to signalize the intent
Dragged and raised this monument
That universe and world, made sure
By whatever it was men met here for,
Might turn on that one victory more.

WINFIELD TOWNLEY SCOTT

S M O K E

Absolution

Crooked as Caliban
And more marred
And hot-iron scarred
And pocked and black with smoke,
Woman and man,
These are my folk.
And their eyes burn
With oh no, not shame
But the love wherewith they came.

I spoke.
I lifted my hand.
And now I understand—
why now slow
White flower-faces turn,
Low morning-voices speak,
I know this thing:
 April does not come to seek,
She comes to bring;
And the swift things rise
And sing.
Nor does ever any shower
Come to take
But to make
And the wild branches wake
And flower.
So must it be
That Love with immortal eyes
Looks not to see.

Her glance is otherwise.

JOHN LOUIS BONN

S M O K E

Alter Ego

He borrows, without consent, the name whereby
My fathers lived, and takes my voice to go abroad—
Imposter so convincing, only God
Knows that the man before you is not I.

He revels in things that I have never seen,
And does what no good man would care to do;
Drunk with deception, he has gone with you
To places where no alien breath should be.

Secretly, once, I went alone to bear
Tidings no other lips but mine should say,
And told them—but when I had come away,
It was the other's voice that echoed there.

I fashioned him to be a slave, but oh!
'Tis I who am the slave, and so rely
Upon him, which is he and which is I,
He does not care, and I no longer know.

TRISTRAM LIVINGSTONE

S M O K E

Una Cabeza Humana

a human head comes slow from forgetfulness
tense stops the air
come slow its looks
a lily brings night on its back
how heavy forgetfulness
the lily a human head which knows love
weaker it is not but the shadow
the eyes do not refuse
the lily is tall from ancient anguish
with unequal unlucky with odd
your lips know how to draw a star without mistake
i have returned from that busy stay and from that timorous
you have no fear
you are tall from various anguishes
it almost reaches love your outstretched arm
i have a guitar with a sleep of several centuries
pain of hands
barred notes which were silent could give the world what it needed
my hand is raised lower
limps the last star of your step and your silence
nothing used to equal your presence with a silence forgotten in your hair
if you spoke there was born another silence
if you were silent the sky answered
i have made myself the memory of a man to hear you
memory of many men
presence of fire to hear you
stopped the career
crossed the bodies and diminished
but you are in the glory of the eternal night
the rain grew up to your lips
do not tell me in what sky you have your lodging
in what forgetfulness your human head
in what love my love of several centuries
i relate the night

S M O K E

this time your lips were going with music
another time the music forgot the lips
listen if you will wait for me in back of that time
when the lilies do not flee
nor the body of a girl is heavy with the dew-slowness of the hours
already there pains me your fatigue of not wishing to return
you knew that you were going to hide silence fear time your body
that you were going to hide your body
now i do not find your memory
another night rises through your silence
nothing for the eyes
nothing for the hands
nothing for pain
nothing for love
why did you have to hide silence
why did you have to lose my hands and my eyes
why did you have to lose my love and my love
another night falls through your silence

EMILIO ADOLFO VON WESTPHALEN
Translation of Sherry Mangan

Extra! Sun Stops!

What shall we do? The sun has stopped in the sky,
It has run down; what shall we do for it?
If it should fall, no telling what it would hit!
It stands just over the mart. At two o'clock
It sagged a little and gave a little jerk
And stopped. Now it is half past five o'clock,
And still it stands. Its time now to quit work:
But what shall we do? Sun Stops! Newsboys cry.

Washington is upset. New York is confused.
The weather bureau is being much abused.
Committees are forming, scientists convene,
Prayer is begun, chances are looking lean
For having night or morning any time soon—
Not to mention noon or forenoon,
only afternoons.

The Star

And then I noticed a misshapen star
Fall utterly extinguished to the earth,
And seeing that one fall, I felt that mirth
Should be repressed and laughter be subdued.
"The fall of stars unheralded!" one said—
"Then who knows but what this star overhead
Guided the destiny of one now dead,
Since it is fallen—, whose life, twisted wry,
Followed this star in falling from the sky?"

Who knows, and who will answer? Answer me."
I did not answer, because suddenly,
Following something deep in me, I felt
The walls of my heart and my fiery heart-strings melt,
And I knew that I was following the star.

S M O K E

Plan of Entrance

At the doorway of desperation it is well
To pause an instant to regard the sky
Above the house that desperation
Inhabits, for it well may be the last
View you have of it, O Agonist!

View the sky, remember its warm tints,
The liquid clear and cold magnificent
Blue of the zenith; then with dignity,
Or not at all, step over the lintel. In
The wide hall pause and look once more at the light
Behind you, for the house of desperation
Is dark, darker than any other nation

(Except that of the tomb, whose is
The tenement of most obscurities).

The Disappointed Angel

It was not hard to hear the beat of wings
Alone in the night on the polished steps of stone
That extended between the highest part of earth
And the lowest part of heaven, for since my birth
Into the new found paradise of death
Noises seemed louder. And I found that my breath
Came and went with greater ease than before.
How I was able to remember all these things

I could tell no one, even the angel who asked
Me what I felt my celestial name should be
Seemed disappointed when I answered Trask,
And counter-suggested with Euphrosyne.
And the kiss of the sun was sweeter than it had been,
And so was the sough of the wind and the beat of the rain.

MERRILL MOORE

No Pity for the Blind Men

Here, at the curb, with skyline static above us,
(the mindless animal hours slower than death)
we lean against iron forged to a twisted lamp-post,
hellish with heat, drawing the ritual breath.

We had no mind in the unfolding buds of those trees
we have walked under, cold, in the winter park,
unaware of the frozen white stars like points of new frost,
and careless of shafted snow as it fell through the dark.

The huge barren autumn of fragments is all of our memory,
ragged dry leaves, the pigeon skirting the roof
of the orchestra-shell, the flower-beds under cut branches,
these were the colorless emblems, the seasonal proof.

And beyond the visual image, the smoke was white by the tree-trunks
shutting the light out, warm on the narrow face.

We have watched the year go, unravelling patterns of nerves,
our eyes turning inward, rotting and rolling for space

and a symbol of death; we have waited for fire and rain
to remake us, angry with blindness, the blistering sun,
the bleached hair; the pencils, the penny-cups here at the street's end,
the fragile hands shaking, the blood slow to run.

S. F. MORSE

S M O K E

What Awe Can Compare

Truly we are the sons of God whose going is more
golden than an autumn leaf,
Whom no glory of living could hold, no love of being
a leader of men or a thief:
A life may move onward into the dark waters, in lovely
ways like a swan,
Or, like the phoenix, may take thunderous flight into
the flame and be gone,
But the mystery remains, a curtain so heavy it has been
withdrawn
By no hand. What silence of worship, what awe can
compare
With the passage of one blind beggar, up through the
realms of air?
Truly our souls are seen, though demonically tried,
To be the sons of God, because we have died.

KEITH THOMAS

Song For a Spade

Bury my body under sand.
Dig for the head, dig for the hand.
What kind of hole will you dig to keep
The part of me that cannot sleep?

Can three dimensions hold a fourth?
Thought cannot buried be in earth
Nor wind be swallowed by the sea,
Which loses to imensity.

I am become something apart
From head and hand, lung and heart;
I am the sun and the total score
Of that there is no measure for.

Bury my body under sand,
But dig no hole in dusty land
For the way I laugh or the love I know
Which has no power but to grow.

S M O K E

Requiem

Goodbye,

You city who were marked by his passing feet
And changed by them; the salt
Of his thought making crystals to hang in the wind
Lately in from the sea; the tilt
Of his hat over eyes looking out from his mind
Which saw and knew and felt.

In the days when you had the sense to keep
His radiance on your stones,
It was farewell only, and every stoop
Was a threshold that might be crossed
And be made to reflect the wind-carried step
Of him you have lost.

Goodbye,

For the salt is gone that I thought came in
With the tide. The crystals blur
And fall in the shadow of stagnant gas,
Which smothers the city where
Once magic rose from a breath that was
Passing across the air.

MARY N. S. WHITELEY

S M O K E

Upland Dweller

If the day is not as full as it should be,
Go up and walk with the witch-grass against the closing sky;
Follow first the moor path, encircle the briars;
You will find the secret of the Autumn wrought fires.
Here is a place where dwells the paper immortelle
Living in the wind, and the faint sound of bell
That wandering sheep play as they graze,
And other epics emerging from the upland haze.
There are days here that no man ever knew,
Only the crackle of fire and riddle of smoke in infinite blue,
And at night immeasurable quiet ascends
From the whole scheme toward heaven.

The Harkening

Night has a tryst with man.
Let him break his heart and know his own riddle,
Step off the white road and look far from the hill,
Lie down and listen
The talisman is playing on his pipe of bone;
Eternal goat lies on eternal stone;
Night lifts her head above the haunted grove;
Let man hearken here, alone.
Harkening, he will feel the earth clinging
to his beautiful garment,
His hands will be empty, for night remembers nothing;
He will say to himself—'I am alive and alone,
At last I am a figure, straightway alone.'

Night is a tryst with man.
Let him take his heart and unite with a woman,
Start on a road to a broad high hill,
Lie down and listen

H. NELSON HOOVEN

Union Square

The stone faces—fold into the flesh;
signals of life, the streets—uttering;
nor the smile that brightens from the gleaming eyes,
the happy sound of voices—the pitch musical;
neither the smile—nor the sound of the mouth
muttering; men go like the winds, fumbling in the Square—
across the grasses and the monuments
of historical memory.

There is nothing urgent here—
though I have seen a face blaze into the sun,
antagonistic, the slogan of *eyes* and *hands* raised—
the face a banner: there is nothing here
but monuments and rituals
and people standing and reading papers.

HARRY ROSKOLENKO

Dust Cloud Over Kansas

For two generations the dust of the buffalo lay quietly under the buffalo-grass, under sod which fed on the dust of their bones, as once they had cropped the long sun-cured unharvested hay of winter or succulent grasses of spring, in the day when over the plains of a continent proudly they trod—dark shaggy wandering stars in a cloudless night—before between river and mountains the prairie went white with the skulls and bones of their slaughter. But now restless, they stir; as once the knife, the plow has ripped again their matted hide away: the plains lie flayed and blackened; the grass is gone.

And the ghosts of the buffalo rise; with a moan of wind from the west, blowing dust becomes bone and the bone as in dream shifts to join phantom bone—so they stand in the shade of the Rockies, incredible, numberless band. Through the dusky wind of the noonday their eyes dully smoulder, they lower their ponderous heads and nose in the sand where no grass is nor stubble; from chin and from shoulder hangs the long shredding fleece of beard and mane which mingles and mats with dry smoke rolling up from the plain.

Now they raise angry nostrils and sniff for brown water, for green grass and leaves. Flinty arrows are stinging their flanks as the wind from the west, like a Sioux on his lean hunting-pony, rides yelling; the brown shaggy ranks sway and mill, shuffle, surge. Is it rain to the east? And at first like a lava-flow, landslide, or mass of dark water when floods leave the peaks for the plain the spectral horde moves; then, a hairy and hooved hurricane, they stampede in a frenzied pursuit of the vanishing grass!

A chaotic chimera, they trample and horn one another as they rush through the land, over watered fields planted to wheat

S M O K E

or alfalfa; the towns and their people are lost in the smother
and choke of parched panting breath, shedding hair, flinty feet.
Behind is a desert; plantation and street
are swept by brown fire which no breaking can stay. . . .

Once with arrow and lance, with cliff and with pound,
Sharps rifle, Colt pistol, the stalk and surround—
with all such devices their enemies thinned
their sod-shaking ranks; now they run on the wind
and, like a raw hide which a warrior might lay
on a signal-fire, smudge out the sun from the day.

The sons of their slayers curse, weep, even pray
to an alien god for his conquering bullets of rain,
dream of cottonwood palisades: weapons are vain.
*Phantom bison from mountains to river destroying will pass
until they can lie down once more under buffalo-grass.*

KENNETH PORTER

No Diamond There

No Phidias has sculptured this
 poor putty man.
 In flaccid death he humps,
 a gargoyle without enduring moss
 or vital ugliness of face and form;
 a gross insult to the grave
 and its marble label;
 yet upon this grotesque, grass
 must blow in helpless arcs.
 I heard (mad dream, and the fool must lie),
 this corpse murmur—"when I die,
 dig for the diamond in my eye."

Peaceful person this deceased,
 with deep secrets
 under his caverns of flesh (they say):
 spinels of old courage lie there,
 a garnet will that drives out demons;
 housed in this frame, rare alchemy
 of ores, which not yet seen,
 are never to be seen by men;
 stolen for eternity by this gnome.
 I heard (mad dream, and the fool must lie),
 this corpse murmur—"when I die,
 dig for the diamond in my eye."

Two eyes shook in my palm—
 lustreless slime;
 turned and re-turned and halved;
 a waste of time forced by fantasy
 over a dead man's gibberish,
 over a hope of swift treasure
 ineptly hidden there
 in the gelatin depths of his eyes.
 More fool am I to be so led—
 and prying the sterile orbs with care,
 hoping the jewel is very rare.—
 No diamond there—not there.

ELIZABETH JOHNSON

S M O K E

Improvidence

Rain-music, persistent, beats in a
Rhythm foreordained,
In a monotone
Upon the pines, maples, wintergreen
Berries: and not on these alone.

The mole near the strawberry patch has
Returned to its burrow shaped like
A canal; the cliff-swallow
Is secure in the curve of its cliff:
But I do not know where
I shall find a burrow or cliff—tomorrow.

I am less provident than
Bird, beast, man.
The present has traduced me wholly.
Tonight love and
The rain-gold monotone
Alone
Are time's substantial sand.

FRANCES FLETCHER

Propaganda for Electric Clocks

Destroy, take axes to, heave rocks
At old chronometers.
Put up, exalt electric clocks
To be philosophers

To set the individual free
Of winding springs at night;
To teach the new horology
Of passive being-right.

No chimes, no clumsy pendulum,
No running fast nor slow,—
With what tremendous maximum
Of competence they go.

Oh, how precise, how orderly
A minute is produced
By the unseen, unheard A C!
What faultless hours are loosed

From central power stations whence
The standard pulses bring
Time-perfect,—barring accidents
Like men . . . and lightning.

KILE CROOK

S M O K E

Creation

Wherever the dead are, there they are and
nothing more. But you and I can expect
to see angels in the meadow grass that look
like cows—

And wherever we are is paradise in furnished
room, without bath, and six flights up is
all God! We read
to one another, loving the sound of s's
slipping- up on t's and much is good
enough to raise hair on our heads, like
Rilke and Owen—

Any person
who loves another person, wherever in the world,
is with us in this room

even though
there are battlefields.

KENNETH PATCHEN

Wm. R. Brown Co., Printers
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- LAURETTE VIRGINIA PIZER *History Lesson*
is said to be only fourteen, lives in New York City, and appears for
the first time in any poetry magazine.
- SUSANNA VALENTINE MITCHELL *Now Lettest Thou Thy Servant Depart*
is the editor of SMOKE and the author *Journey Taken by a Woman*
- ALBERT CLEMENTS *Diplomat of Light, Wanderers, Weapons of Enlistment*
Only in Flight
is a frequent contributor of poetry to many magazines
- DAVID CORNEL DEJONG *But We Are Resting Now*
is the author of one novel, several translations, but has not yet
collected his poetry in book form
- SPAHR HOURLLAND *Out of the Past*
from Lake Maranacook, Maine, makes his first appearance in
SMOKE
- WINFIELD TOWNLEY SCOTT *Old Talk, Menhir*
will have his first volume of poetry, *Biography of Traman* published
by Covici-Friede this winter
- JOHN LOUIS BONN *Absolution*
from Boston College, has appeared in: *Poetry, Voices, etc.*
- TRISTRAM LIVINGSTONE *Alter Ego*
also from Boston, appears in SMOKE for the first time
- EMILIO ADOLFO VON WESTPHALEN *Una Cabeza Humana*
the "Tzara of Peru," contributes this poem translated by:
- SHERRY MANGAN
who is the author of one novel and several volumes of poetry
- MERRILL MOORE *Extra! Sun Stops!, The Star, Plan of Entrance,*
The Disappointed Angel
is the author of numerous volumes of poetry, and known to all
poetry readers
- SAMUEL FRENCH MORSE *No Pity for the Blind Men*
a frequent contributor to magazines, marks his second appearance
in SMOKE
- KEITH THOMAS *What Awe Can Compare*
from Mission, Texas, appears here for the first time
- MARY N. S. WHITELEY *Song for a Spade, Requiem*
has appeared in several magazines such as *Poetry, Windsor Quar-*
terly and others
- N. NELSON HOOVEN *Upland Dweller, The Harkening*
sends us his poetry from Coolville, Ohio
- HARRY ROSKOLENKO *Union-Square*
one of the better known of the younger poets appears frequently in
a large variety of magazines
- KENNETH PORTER *Dust Cloud Over Kansas*
hardly needs introduction to readers of American poetry
- ELIZABETH JOHNSON *No Diamond There*
from Staten Island, New York, also appears with us for the first time
- FRANCES FLETCHER *Improvvidence*
is the author of several volumes of poetry
- KILE CROOK *Propaganda for Electric Clocks*
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is the author of a volume of poetry which last year appeared with
Random House

